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Non-Objectivity in Nature

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NON-OBJECTIVITY IN NATURE

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ABSTRACT

It is the purpose of this thesis to explore the role of nature as it is linked to the non-objective artists of the twentieth century and to discuss the role of the artist's creative spirit.

What the artist sees in nature differs from what exists in nature and the problem of relating nature to the artist's personal reality becomes complex. Visual sensations induced by nature and acquired by the artists have expanded due to the new concepts of nature. These concepts require the artist to feel the dynamic energies of nature as well as its outside appearance. The artist sees in nature and interprets the new scientific marvels that include the space age and the microscope. There are two dominating approaches to nonfigurative art which influence contemporary artists: (1) the meditative which is a deliberate attempt to evoke images as seen in the work of Baziotes and other twentieth century artists and (2) the expressive which is a spontaneous expression of inner impulse as viewed in the work of Pollock.

Often the non-objective artist relies on visual nature only as an initiative force; thereafter, the artist's creative spirit stimulates him in determining what directions his personal expression will take. The artist's sensibility, imagination, his awareness of form and color, his need to express his own inner feelings about the reality he believes in; all have an influence on the artist's personal voice.

This writer has responded intuitively to the integrated experiences received from nature in his work. Other influences on his works include the work of contemporary artists, criticisms on his work and art history.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and establish the relationship of the twentieth century non-objective artists to nature and to reveal the close affinity to nature which I feel as an artist. It embraces my philosophy which has been formed by a sympathy and response to the abstract directions of expressionism in contemporary art.

At this point it is necessary to state that in a broad sense the term artist, when referred to in this thesis, includes many non-objective painters of the twentieth century (but excludes the optical artists). The term non-objective more literally means non-figurative; it describes a painting without figuration or representation of visual objects and forms.

In order to define the close affinity the non-objective artist has to nature, I intend to explain that this affinity does not recall visual reality in the created work but that a sense of pulsating energy thrown off by nature arouses the artist to creation. I feel an affinity not only to the visual richness of nature but to the rhythms underlying it. The work produced becomes an expression reflected from the integration of ideas perceived or created within.

This thesis will link the changes that take place in nature to the changing trends and directions of the artist. This environment, ever-changing, requires the artist to have the intuitive ability to entertain new ideas, new directions, and harness new sensations.

Not only does the artist need a deep awareness of the natural, universal forces surrounding him, but he also must have a deep desire to create, for creativity can be in itself the dominant motivation that prods the artist on. This concept of creativity, derived from his inner self, dictates the artist's personal attitude and his need to explore, to search, and to express. This is the artist's creative spirit which is also developed in this paper.

This creative process requires that the artist have a keen awareness of the aesthetics of form and color. The artist has at his command a variety of materials from which to try to create a new order; in addition to form and color he must have a knowledge of the technique he is using and a sensitive perception. It is my intention to elaborate on this. My past experiences and training in the use of material, the work of contemporary artists, criticisms of my work, all have an influence on my work and philosophy. This thesis is derived from these basic ideas developed during the formative years in response to my individual needs.

CHAPTER I

THE INFLUENCE OF NATURE

Frequently the twentieth century non-objective artist is confronted with the accusation that he removes himself from nature, from what he actually sees, the visual reality in front of him. To answer such accusations in any simple way would be impossible. It is necessary to point out that nature is many times the sole source of motivation. In its purest sense nature is many times the direct cause of a non-objective painting coming into being, and is often the cause of the visual, emotional and intellectual qualities of such painting. It becomes necessary to explain that reality is one thing for the layman's eye and another for the eye of the artist. The commonly accepted version of the viewer is one in which images remain undistorted; he is then able to associate the image with a descriptive word or term that characterizes its visual form. Most artists have ideas about the things they look at or paint and the reality many artists believe in (and create on canvas) is not the commonly accepted visual version. They are interested in nature but often look at it from different perspectives; this enables them to draw their own reality. Where does the reality of the artist draw its origin and its stimulation? Willis Nelson has answered the question in this manner: "There is not a search for an image, but a reaction to the form and colors as they give rise to subconscious feelings that are

experienced in nature and nature's many moods".[1] The problem of the artist's affinity with nature becomes complex and the projection of this inner consciousness a more abstruse matter. The visual absorption of nature by man is tempered by the visual capabilities of man. What the artist as man sees in nature differs from what exists in nature itself.

The problem of relating nature to this "personal reality" also becomes complex. The definitions of "nature" expand and the artist finds that there are a thousand new concepts of what "nature" is and he must expand his vision to include these new worlds of seeing and feeling. Hans Hoffman has stated this concept in the following words, "The new outlook makes us understand that nature is not limited to the objects we see—but that everything in nature offers the possiblity of creative transformation, depending of course on the sensibility of the artist".[2]

Nature, then, takes on many definitions to each one viewing it. The dictionary definition for nature is as follows: "that which is the source or essence of life; creative force, the powers that produce all existing phenomena; the world, or matter, or matter and mind; the universe". This includes then not only the images of the world in front of our eyes, but the world of our inner selves; not only the imagery of things we know, but the world of inventive forms and shapes. These inventive forms are a part of the artist's nature and do not always add up to a legible visual experience in the terms of reality as

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[1] Willis Nelson, "The Relationship of Abstract Painting and Drawing to Nature" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Art Department, University of North Dakota, 1962), p.12.

Katharine Kuh, The Artist's Voice (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 122.

generally accepted. The intake of visual sensation from nature is a mysterious quality that many non-figurative artists know how to exploit. How varied and differently they each see and take what appeals to them from the visual world is apparent by the many directions each painter has taken. For example, the grain of a tree, the fine veins of a leaf, the structure of a clod of earth, the cracks and abrasions on old walls, and the delicate patterns in the sand of a river bed--all these images provide stimulation for the artist's eye and mind. They are a part of the raw material he may call upon when he creates his own world. This facet of thinking has always been true. Leonardo Da Vinci once spoke of the fascination to be found in the accidental effects of nature, such as stained and worn walls, and how they suggest composition to the artist. Jean Dubuffet's works illustrate how some of these images stimulated him. Werner Haftmann speaks of this stating that:

> From a dried up mud puddle, a clod of earth in our path, the aged face of the earth peeks out at us, and in a fragment of stone can be read the sorrowful tale of our cooling planet. In order to activate this strange and wonderful store of images, to regain possession of these fugitive poetic insights and to give them permanence, Dubuffet sought to create on his pictorial field, conditions that would produce similar response. . . . He found the basis of a direct, compulsive expression, consonant with the method of bringing up images from the pictorial ground.[3]

Today the artist is aware of the endless new forms and worlds presented to him by the space age and by the microscope, by the new concepts of nature and its meaning and by the new scientific marvels and man's relation to all of these concepts. Here is new material for the

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[3]Werner Haftmann, Painting in The Twentieth Century, I (London: Lund, Humphries, 1960), p. 361.

artist, new moods, new sensations, and new feelings. These new concepts, including the idea that dynamic energy has taken the place of physical substance, require that the artist should contemplate not only the finished outside forms of nature but its dynamic energies, its active essence. The artist is aroused by the pulsating energy nature throws off; he paints not the finished forms of nature's trees, rivers, etc. but expresses the energies that generate them. He understands nature not in terms of objects but of actions. Thus, these concepts can influence what the artist will create, what directions his energies will take to express his thoughts. In connection with this concept, Fritz Winter's works have been discussed in the following words:

> In connection with Winter's paintings we see diagrams of energies, structures, fields of forces, delicate patterns, which we seem to recognize because their inherent naturalness and necessity suggest that these are the forms in which nature records the living consummation of her vital impulses and which in turn summon the painter to transform his experience of animated nature into similarily animated diagrams. He leaves behind him the finished, ready made elements of the natural image, he makes himself as dynamic as nature, and with his art gives visible form to experiences that are inaccessible to representational art--the growth process of living creatures, the driving forces of the earth, the rising of the sap, the blowing of the wind, the flowing of rivers.[4]

Returning to the problem of clarifying the relationship of the painter to nature, I believe that different painters are influenced in different degrees by what they see in nature. Some of the more obvious aspects of what nature is composed of for the non-objective painter has been discussed. Each painter must respond in his own way to his creative process. As mentioned earlier, nature being the cause of the visual, emotional and intellectual qualities of a painting it must be further stated that emotion, vision and intellect depend not only on

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[4]Ibid., p. 373.

nature as it exists outside of man, but the degree of expression of each is determined by the susceptibility of man as an artist to the visual experience. For example, taking the emotional aspects, a tempestuous storm visually appears emotional. The degree or intensity of emotion to be expressed in the art form is determined by the effect of the visual experience upon the particular emotional state of man as artist at the precise moment of creation. In other words, the emotional quality of the painting will depend upon the degree to which nature in its particular state of energy coincides with the emotional state of man. The resulting creation becomes each artist's own personal statement about one's state of mind at the time of conception. Influences outside of the emotional aspects of nature such as economic, social and personal attitudes affect individual directions and the expression they will create.

Nature can determine the artist's emotion toward nature itself. It can cause man to motivate his actions. The artist's emotions can be determined by the acts of nature. For example, decay of nature is caused by nature and by man through neglect. Nature is the cause of rotting timber, spoiled crops and desolate landscapes. These are the natural acts which recall an emotional response. These are changes in nature which stimulate the artist to action by bringing together the state of nature and a particularly unique position (emotionally) of the artist that causes the artist to interpret this visual change.

Often the non-figurative artist relies on visual nature only as an initiative force. He may transmit to the canvas particular segments, which he may enlarge, simplify, compound, distort or change by color. He may not take one particular experience but reflect on more than one visual experience before he tries to transmit them to the canvas.

Thereafter the painting progresses according to the will of the intellect as well as to the emotions. The artist knows that more of nature exists than what is visible to him, thus the intellect and emotions must conjure methods of introducing these other segments of nature into the painting. The artist tries to transpose, transform, and interpret visual reality in the light of his own experiences.

To what different degrees the non-objective artists have taken what they see in nature can be seen in the works of some of the twentieth century abstract expressionists and in the critical analysis of their works. Space has been devoted to the abstract expressionists in this work because of their influence on the past, the present and the obvious influence upon painting in the near future. There is much to be learned from their approach although some of them deny representational origin of the forms found in their works.

Before 1945 there was a growing tendency to combine the figurative with the non-figurative quite freely. Sometimes Arshile Gorky is given the credit for being the transitional artist, an artist who excelled in both figurative and non-figurative modes during the thirties. Some critics state that Gorky treated nature as a "cryptogram", that is as a writing in secret characters or cipher. Werner Haftmann, in his analysis of Gorky's works writes the following:

> . . . The driving force in his art was not scientific anguish but nature and his own inner life. His relation to the world around him was still dominated by a poetic nature mythology. He began to people his pictures with other wordly forms and beings. On fluid colored grounds which always evoked landscapes, a fine trance-like line gropes its ways forwards, creating vegetable forms and biomorphic shapes. And this vegetation sprouting the unconscious reflects the artist's deepest feelings of tenderness and shock in the presence of nature.[5]

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[5]Ibid., p. 331.

There are two dominating approaches of the non-figurative artists which influence contemporary artists. The one is meditative, its proponents sought to attain the mythical images provoked in the unconscious through apperception of the world. They responded with a pure and absolute attitude. The other approach was expressive intent on the spontaneous expression of inner impulse, on direct psychic improvisation. Free rein is given to impulse, accepting chance and action in the approach.

The proponents of the first point of view, the meditative, include for example, Mark Rothko, William Baziotes, and Clifford Still. These artists work with what Sam Hunter has called a symbolic surrealist tinctured abstraction in varying degrees. About Rothko he states;

> Beyond purely pictorial values, the basic rationalism of his method and the mood of ideal calm in his paintings have certain moral implications. They seem to embody an underlying ethical belief in the rational principle which governs the world of artistic form and natural life. Imaginary creatures grew like a kind of submarine flora from dim fluid grounds.[6]

These artists work with nature and respond to it with a certain quality of mystery, a preoccupation with myth. The myths they enact are nature myths, they create a new mythology in the unconscious and make it visible in their paintings.

The scientific environment has influenced some artists with the more absolute approach to non-objectivism, for instance, even in the slides of microscopic matter the artist tends to see subjects as intelligible images of a world he walks about in or one he imagines. One artist, Wols (Alfred Otto Wolfgang Schulze) interpreted nature by returning to what is called multi-evocative forms--that is the kind of

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[6]Sam Hunter, Modern American Painting and Sculpture (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1959), p. 156.

forms discovered under the microscope, in the cellular structure of living organisms, in the atomic structure of matter, and in malignant growth. Wols' paintings, a completely abstract type of expressionism, exemplify this passage by Herbert Read:

> The forms that the artist creates derive their significance from the fact that they are forms that are echoed throughout the cosmos--in the structures of metals, fibres, organic tissues, electron diffraction patterns, frequency modulations, detonation patterns, etc. What is significant about such forms is that they are not necessarily precise or regular.[7]

What images are drawn by the artist from the natural forces are well stated in Wols' own words:

> At Cassis the pebbles, the fish
> rocks, under a magnifying-glass
> sea-salt and the sky
> have made me forget human pretensions
> have invited me to turn my back
> on the chaos of our goings-on
> have shown me eternity
> in the little waves of the harbour
> which repeat themselves
> without repeating themselves. . . .[8]

The proponents of the spontaneous expression approach deny the representational origin of their forms for the most part and their motive is to try to extinguish the nature inspired image altogether. Whatever the artist's intentions (the resulting works being total non-objectivism) by the very nature of spontaneous action they create forms that suggest organic growth and rhythm and there are still many elements of nature rather than the abstract aspects of nature. They are non-naturalistic, but they have the power to give one an experience of nature parallel to that which nature gives. Art critics compare the

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[7]Sir Herbert Read, A Concise History of Modern Painting (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1959), p. 257.

[8]Ibid., p. 256.

forms and statements of the abstract expressionists to forms and moods of nature.

Two of the artists following this spontaneous approach and having the most influence on the modern painting in America are William DeKooning and Jackson Pollock. The work of these artists has been likened to nature symbolism in an article in Life magazine. It goes on to say that "this art . . . although it seems to be unlike any other it is actually involved with the same matter that art of all ages has dealt with . . . nature, man and the spirit. . . . Instead of painting a landscape he suggests diversity by myriad unexpected forms; its vastness by sweeping rhythmical lines; or its peaceful mood by soft harmonies of tone."[9]

Although in Pollock's works, the imagery denies reference to natural appearances, there has been statements made by critics comparing them to nature, as in the following one:

> Pollock's purer, non-representational plastic "writing" also has a backlash of suggested presences and near-imagery. In much of his work, the image is denied but something of its atmosphere and immanence remains, creating a powerful and luminous diffusion of felt content throughout the length and breadth of the canvas. For the author they arouse primitive feelings associated with such sonorous phrases as "the deep" or the "starry firmament", identifying a universe beyond human. It was one of Pollock's single accomplishments to give such magnitude and impressiveness to the act of painting as to make us think of the mysteries of natural creation, of that "first division of chaos" at the origin of the world.[10]

DeKooning's wholly abstract works evoke associations with things seen and experienced. His objective titles as Night Square suggest that figurative conceptions held a place in his mind as he worked.

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[9]"Part I, Baffling U. S. Art," Life, September 10, 1961.

[10]Hunter, p. 142.

This is pointed out by Werner Haftmann: "In the last few years an objective motif seeks to shine through the powerful color planes: a landscape. . . . It is not the starting point but the result of a pictorial action, which can encompass precise optical impressions and memories".[11] Jack Tworkov's paintings, which are also non-figurative, have been said to have a suggestion of a specific atmosphere and even of a natural reality which is also reflected in his titles.

We find that many times the artist does not relate his paintings to nature and it is purely accidental that natural attitudes and elements creep in. The painter allows the technique he has chosen to give expression to his feelings and emotions. Sometimes this idea is conceived before painting but often as not the spontaneous gesture of painting on the canvas generates its own conclusions. A contemporary artist, Jack Youngerman, illustrates this idea that the relationship to nature is not necessarily premeditated in his own words:

> My first sketches derive from a kind of rhythm, a certain feeling which may be vaguely provoked by nature, but as likely as not by some interior bodily impulse or condition or some such indescribable source. They are less calculated in their origin than people tend to think.[12]

There are non-figurative painters who reject a "beginning with nature" premise and state that they prefer to have no direct or indirect relationship with nature. They find within themselves a new kind of reality with personal shapes and forms bearing no relation to the objective world (one group would be the optical artists, another "hard edge"). When nature does appear in the painting or the viewer

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[11] Haftmann, p. 352.

[12] Michael Benedikt, "Youngerman: Liberty in Limits," Art News, Vol. LXIV, No. 5 (September, 1965), p. 54.

finds some concept that seems to indicate a close contact with the natural elements in form or color, the artist feels it would be better if we did not read such things into his paintings. I find it unnecessary and impossible to feel that a non-objective painter can reject the relationship to nature that is more or less realised in all his paintings. As quoted from a work on modern painting:

> There is too much of nature in us for it to be other than an intinsic part of our make-up. There would be no point in trying to rid our inner field of experience of all of these visions and perceptions that have impressed themselves on our minds since childhood . . . which cannot but exteriorise themselves in art in a fairly obvious way.[13]

The image has never quite been destroyed. DeKooning cheerfully acknowledges this debt to nature: "I see things I like. I don't fight them. Maybe it is only a puddle. Four or five months later they come back to me. . . ."[14] Mondrian sums up precisely the close affinity the non-objective artist has to nature, stating it this way:

> "It is wrong to think that the non-figurative artist finds impressions and emotions received from the outside useless, and regards it even as necessary to fight against them. On the contrary, all that the non-figurative artist receives from the outside is not only useful but indispensible, because it arouses in him the desire to create what he only vaguely feels and which he could never represent in a true manner without the contact with visible reality and with the life which surrounds him. It is precisely from this visible reality that he draws the objectivity which he needs in opposition to his personal subjectivity. It is precisely from this visible reality that he draws his means of impression: and he regards the surrounding life, it is precisely this which has made his art non-figurative.[15]

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[13] Michel Seuphor, Dictionary of Abstract Painting, With a History of Abstract Painting (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1959), p. 5.

[14] "Art, Big Splash," Time, May 18, 1959, p. 72.

[15] Robert L. Herbert (ed.), Modern Artists on Art (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 129.

CHAPTER II

THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

In Chapter I, I have discussed the artist's reliance on nature and his awareness of natural universal forces that make up his environment. This is but a part of the total concept embraced by the artist; the other part is the artist's personal attitude, his compulsion and passionate need to explore and to search; actions which lead him to express his own inner feeling about reality in his painting. This conviction urges him to a glorious adventure of investigation, discovery, and multi-purposed decisions that determine the finality of his painting.

The personal creative spirit has no beginning or end; each step in the creative process is dependent on the other. As the artist becomes involved in painting, he finds no discontinuity in the creative experience; rather, the events in the sequence of painting are prone to overlap one another to such a degree that there is difficulty in distinquishing the end of one event and the beginning of another. The idea, the painting process, and the painting itself are dependent on one another. The creative idea is completely involved with putting paint on the canvas. However, the painting is not necessarily the crystallization of the initial idea, for the creative process of painting often transforms it. There will be constant changing and revising necessary before the painting is complete.

During the course of exploration a painter is continually stimulated by what is transpiring on the surface of the canvas. More of

the discovery for him takes place on the canvas as he paints than when he is planning his painting. The picture he starts with is vague; it is a nudge, a feeling, a premonition. He does not begin with the painting fully developed; it evolves as it is conditioned by the total painting process. Forms begin to emerge one interlocking with another. Color is chosen to characterize these forms and establish the mood of the entire painting. The painter is often completely unaware of what will eventually be the finished work. Kandinsky, on his later non-objective paintings, stated that he was unaware of any conscious thoughts during the actual labor. It must be understood that Kandinsky and all intellectual artists analyze their paintings when not engaged in painting; that the painting process is not completely subconscious, automatic application of paint to a surface. Solving the problems of color, space, light and mood require a great deal of intellectual consideration. There is a time for painting and a time for studying what has been painted. The artist contemplates his beliefs and assimilates significant aspects of life's experiences to produce an expression worthy of his convictions. He carefully considers what new moves he feels are required.

The new moves which the artist makes frequently change the creative act into a destructive act. Forms, though at times surprisingly beautiful, must for the sake of the total impact of the painting be altered partially or completely wiped out. This can be done by scraping away the paint or by overpainting when the area is wet or dry. Sometimes this results in unusual textures that become a permanent part of the painting, thus leaving traces of formal exploration and discovery. The non-objective painter more so than the realist is able to take advantage of this process as it assists him to move in different

directions, and this he can do without jeopardizing the planned painting concept. In analysis, the destructive act becomes the creative act; it leaves a purer aesthetic expression simply because the artist has not been bogged down by predetermined thoughts. Such painters as Jean Paul Riopelle, Pier Soulages, Mark Tobey, Jackson Pollock, and many others experience healthy destructive forces in their exploratory processes.

It is the artist's imagination that prods the artist into the world of the mysterious and the forms he develops are conveyed by his choice of tools. In other words, it is the artist's creative spirit as well as how nature stimulates him that breaches the chasm which divides the known world with the world he does not know.

Form

Some reference has been made to form and I would like to more fully elaborate on this point. A non-objective painter has a close affinity with nature; the forms he creates are related to what exists in nature but are not a part of nature. These forms are the fruit of the artist's endeavors. The form characterizes what I shall try to express in this thesis, this form emerging from the artist's subconscious in terms of the reality manifested in nature. For if the artist were to remove himself entirely from nature, the results would be as Kandinsky has stated: "If we were to break the bonds that bind us to nature and devote ourselves purely to combination of independent form and pure color, the artist would provide mere geometric decoration, resembling something like a necktie or a carpet."[16]

A painter re-creates nature by determining to a large extent the

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[16]Read, p. 240.

way in which he works with form. Arrangements of isolated shapes such as those we find in the work of Baziotes appear to have meaning in nature whether or not we can define such meaning precisely. Form is difficult to define; it is an over all term that relates to the total expressiveness of a work of art. The forms in a work of art are in themselves the content and whatever expressiveness there is in the work of art originates with the forms.

We must remember that the painter can create forms spontaneously without reference to a predetermined idea. Indeed, the very fact that such forms may have sprung from his mind only in an unconscious gesture during the creative process may make them seem to us even more mysteriously meaningful. The artist has certain forms "built" into his psyche to which he responds whenever he encounters them in the world around him and on the canvas where they seem to emerge by themselves. It is the psyche which speaks and the artist formally adheres to the vision within himself. This vision itself is fed by images from all human experiences. Kandinsky is quoted on the creative process of form which fits most closely my beliefs whereby the artist pulls a work from his mind. Kandinsky said, "I do not consciously choose the form, the form spontaneously chooses itself in me."[17] The form that he needed then (during the actual labor of painting) was a manifestation of the unconscious of the mood that set him to work in the first place.

Color

The perception of color is the single most strongly emotional

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[17]Will Grohmann, Wassily Kandinsky (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1959), p. 223.

part of the visual process. Color (in part) sets the mood for the painting. For this artist, color does not have symbolic associations with nature, it is form in itself. The German, E. W. Nay, said "to paint is to form the picture from color."[18] Color and form would seem to be inseparable. As I have said, painted form on the canvas surface is manifested in nature, expressed by the artist's inner feelings; it is the artist's inner feeling that chooses the color. How, then, can he explain his color concept of a painting, that is, the color associations? He can in a general way verbalize about the total color concept of a painting, such as the painting that emulates a dark glow might be all he intended, so the color he used would suffice for a dark glow. The artist finds it difficult at times to say why he used this or that specific color, the color seems to find its own way to the canvas by search and discovery and by the build-up of paint (one layer upon another) and the previously applied layers of paint become an integral part of the composition.

The viewer is often misled when analysing a non-objective painting. He has picked up some notions about color that are associative with human emotions. His reactions to color are often strong and immediate and he associates the most diverse experiences and emotions with certain colors. Blue, for example, is a color that can cause him to feel wistful, sad, or lonely; it also has the ability to make him feel cool. Red, on the other hand, can give him an impression of violence or destruction. And these colors may even affect his perception of depth; a red color generally appears to be closer to him than does a blue color. Cool colors appear to recede, warmer colors to advance toward him. These are all "truisms" and for the most part

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[18]Haftmann, p. 364.

cannot be denied. The painter on the other hand, can relate his emotions to these principles but finds it more convenient to invent and discover color which lends to the particular creative experience. He simply manipulates color by changing and rechanging until he feels a certain harmony envelop his painting that unites the forms with the total expressiveness of the painting. It is the visual appearance, through interaction of color on the painted surface, that excites the artist. Joseph Albers makes the following statement:

> What I am after is interaction. A color can be placed among other colors so that it loses its identity. Gray can look black, depending on what surrounds it. Red looks green or looks like a gas—dematerialized. I work with the same painting, the same colors, over and over—innumerable times. Merely by changing one color, a totally different climate is produced, though all other colors in the work remain identical in area and hue. Each borrows from and gives to the other.[19]

Because the numbers of colors are infinite and possible variations and combinations of these colors endless, the range of impressions that the artist is able to create through the use of color is equally vast. This diversity of cause and effect makes it difficult to describe how we experience color. The artist's color scheme is reflective of the intense feeling toward his environment in many cases. This does not mean that the colors he sees are absorbed into his paintings; but on the contrary, his color is derived from what he feels about the forms that are a part of his environment, and he usually associates himself with those colors that please him in an aesthetic way. Stuart Davis says "I choose from the spectrum colors that are appropriate to the purpose of my paintings, appropriate to the attitude in which the work was designed."[20] The whole develop-

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[19]Kuh, p. 12.

[20]Ibid., p. 64.

ment of form and color is intended to be expressive. Speaking again of Stuart Davis, Sam Hunter has mentioned that Davis' paintings are sometimes said to be too much in the spirit of the poster and a form of mere decoration but he shows an impressive, structural color sense from the very first paintings. Another of his thoughts on color which is pertinent to my experience with color is quoted from Davis' own words: "I think of color as an interval of space—not as red or blue. People used to think of color and form as two things. I think of them as the same thing, so far as the language of painting is concerned. Color in a painting represents different positions in space".[21] There is a vague inner necessity of what is right concerning the development of color and form and the artist seeks intuitively for an arrangement of colors that will express his "rightness".

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[21]Hunter, p. 128.

CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION TO WORKS

Motivated by nature's elements, my work has evolved gradually and naturally over the years, forcing me to respond intuitively to the integrated experiences I have received from nature. To create an interpretation of nature rather than a copy, is the goal of the non-objective artist of today. I see a great deal of natural beauty daily but do not try to duplicate the magnificent lake shore, the glorious sunset, the flawless tree; instead, I absorb what is seen as good for the spirit and it is translated inside of me into the creative energy that enables me to paint. When I paint then, I am guided by an inner impulse to capture on canvas the emotion which nature has stimulated. This emotion develops into tangible forms and color that are conceived only through the process of trial and error. This then, is my goal.

My paintings are personal expressions reflected from the integration of ideas perceived or created within. My paintings are based on a belief in order and unity of form found in the painting as being the basic quality of life and matter. If a painter is to realize a significance, his work, I believe, will follow a consistent growth and development. In order to realize this growth, and artist must absorb what has gone before him in terms of style and aesthetic philosophy. I feel that I owe a debt to the culture of modern painting. Here I would like particularly to mention some works which have had an influence on the paintings done for this thesis: the power and

intensity of Pierre Soulages' Painting 1954; the colorful, primitive, cave-like painting by Will Baumeister, Two Lanterns; the subtle color tonality and textural line quality in Antonio Tapies' Yellow Painting 1954.

Stimulation for me is found everywhere: in the cracks and crevices of the sun baked earth, the magnificance of field and rock as seen from the air, or in the anatomy of the earth as it might look from the space satelite, the patterns found in an empty lot strewn with debris, the time deepened color and texture of walls and the minute world as seen under a microscope. I can find substance where many fail to look and enjoy an affinity with things which others might consider pointless or alien.

During the course of painting, this stimulation I have discussed is left behind and is not consciously thought of in determining the direction or course I might take. Some of my best paintings are invariably those which cost me the least effort those which simply happen to me. It is my personal attitude, my need to explore, to search and express that leads to discovery and decision that becomes as vitally important as nature's stimulation.

It is important that I have a number of paintings in working condition at one time, giving me an opportunity to continue painting and to study presumably finished paintings for further alterations. It must be noted that paintings may be thought or felt to be finished at various stages of the work. The problem is, however, to decide just when and whether all elements are contributing to the expression of my thoughts.

The completion of a painting is not usually apparent when using the non-objective approach since the artist can stop the

painting, depending on how complex he wishes it to be, at any given stage. A painting is finished only when all the elements of the work are developed to the point which most satisfactorily expresses every intuitive impulse, the point where every intuitive impulse has been converted to visible form. For me there is often the tendency to feel that a painting is finished at too early a stage and upon further study and observation, I have taken so called finished paintings and reworked them on a minor or major basis. Often the need for reworking is not evident until I have visually associated myself with the painting for a considerable length of time. It is possible that some of my latest paintings produced for this thesis are not finished at the time of this writing.

It is necessary to point out the changes that occurred in my work during the past year of painting. Painting is in some ways an act of eliminating or taking away---in that the artist puts a dab here, a dab there, making adjustments and correcting relationships as he works, eliminating and painting away the irritations of bad color and faulty composition until the picture feels complete and whole.

The bulk of my thesis work was finalized rapidly during a three month period. I labored on two or three oils and watercolors simultaneously and built new canvases whenever necessary (usually when the stimulation to paint was not prevalent). Of the early works (totaling seven oils) only one has not been reworked. One canvas in particular has collected ten layers of paint. On the other hand, the watercolors were more easily executed.

The change occurring in my works (as mentioned earlier) is associated with the development of my oils. I had some definite feel-

ings about form that I was exploiting in terms of simple painted shapes. The watercolors developed along a more detailed exploratory path involving collage.[22] Comparing these two divergent trends, I found that the more complex watercolors were more favorable to my individual needs. As a result, many of my new oils have been in various stages of progression. The stimulus for the later oils is apparently derived from my smaller complex watercolors. The presentation of my works as I discuss each painting will be in the order in which they were finished to indicate the evolution that takes place.

Technique

Oils on Canvas

The structure on which the canvas is stretched is the conventional frame made of good quality pine board (one inch by two inches) with the corners mitered at right angles. The frame is bound together with white blue and corrugated fasteners at each corner. The size of the frame indicates the need for additional supports to prevent the frame from warping or sagging under the tension of the stretched canvas. The canvas is cut so that it overlaps approximately three inches on all sides. It is then stretched and tacked to the sides of the frame with carpet tacks. Before any painting can begin, the canvas must be sized.[23] I use rabbit skin glue

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[22]Collage is an assemblage of foreign material (such as paper or cloth or any elements found in our everyday life) which lend themselves to the aesthetic quality of the composition.

[23]Sizing renders a pourous surface (such as canvas) non-pourous. This prevents the oil paint from being absorbed into the material and makes the surface more conducive to painting.

for sizing. Another thing which must be done before painting is priming.[24] For priming I use a flat white oil base paint for the best results.

During the act of painting, it is feasible to use an assortment of brushes and palette knives plus other less conventional tools such as wooden sticks, pieces of cardboard, paper and even my fingers for applying the paint to the canvas. The oils are sometimes thinned with a painting medium (damar varnish, standoil and turpentine) sometimes only turpentine, and occasionally without any thinning depending on the expression I am trying to convey.

There are two ways of developing a painting, the multi-stage process and the alla-prima or all in one setting process. A multi-stage painting develops more slowly allowing each successive layer of paint to dry before overpainting. The alla-prima painting develops more rapidly since it depends on the mixture of one wet color into another directly on the canvas. The edges of the painted forms are generally softer and less defined with the alla-prima process. I combine both methods in oil painting.

Watercolor Collage

I use a 140 pound weight, student grade, watercolor paper which is stretched on a watercolor board. The proceedure is as follows: the paper is saturated with water, then patted with a towel to eliminate excess moisture. It is then taped to a masonite board with three inch width gum tape. As the paper dries, it shrinks providing a smooth taut surface on which to paint.

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[24]Priming creates an additional surface which acts as a buffer to protect the sizing and affords a clean white surface more conducive to preliminary drawing on the canvas surface.

Watercolor is a transparent medium composed of finely ground pigment, mixed with a light binder such as gum arabic dissolved in water and is prepared semi-moist in cakes or pans and moist in tubes. The paint is applied with an assortment of watercolor brushes. The brushes are made of oxhair and are soft and flexible.

I enjoy a two fold experience while working with watercolor. The first experience is the manipulation of the paint on the paper. Secondly, it is the addition of various papers which are glued to the surface. Painting and gluing of paper are done simultaneously. I most frequently use tissue paper, but from time to time employ papers of another nature. When paper is used in association with paint, it is thought of as collage.

Aesthetics

The stimulation nature provides for me either from real life or from what I have observed in terms of style and aesthetic philosophy of other painters, is the driving force which prompts me to place that first stroke of paint upon the canvas that will violate the purity of the white surface. From this point the painting suddenly erupts and is carried to its ultimate end by the spirit of creation that is part of my inner life. I find it impossible to verbalize or interpret the meaning of the form and color found in my paintings; rather I may say that it is a total expression of emotions, moods, and thought processes.

The way in which I experience and interpret my inner feelings in terms of painted form has led me to do a number of paintings that do not carry the same style. It is, instead, a desire to increase my own knowledge about my environment. In other words, I resist the idea that a painter should repeat his paintings in idea and style

endlessly in order that his work should be easily recognized and classified. The expression resulting must be an individual solution to the problems arising from the artist's attempt to interpret his feelings. The artist should continually experiment seeking new means of expression to convey his thoughts; subsequently the style of my painting has changed. This is a reason why the watercolors seem far removed from the earlier oils associated with this thesis.

I might add, though, that the same calmness and solidity found in the oils prevail also in my watercolors. What I do strive for is power and mystery in my work. What begins as nature's inspiration becomes, as the work progresses, a struggle with the material; material which has begun to take on a life of its own. A work of art must be very alive.

When a painting is titled it has to be appropriate because the painting must live up to its title. I believe this puts an obstacle in the path of the viewer; he searches only for the title and gives little effort to interpreting the total painting. For this reason I did not title my paintings. I refer to them as Painting I, II, etc.

PAINTING I (Figure 1)

Oil

Although this painting was started first, it was not completed for many months later. The structure of this painting deals with an element of nature--a nature manifested in the mind of man and revealed as a segment of the earth's anatomy as seen from above. I have tried to capture the feeling of power from my association with a visual experience; the rich blackness of the soil when it is surrounded by land containing the color of growth. The dark inorganic form represents a confined piece of black earth wanting to force its way beyond its own limits by sheer power. This is quite impossible in a literal sense but is experienced as a felt sensation by me. The dark form, too, is symbolic of man trapped in his own environment; trying to rise above it. To add interest to the meaning of the simple form, the background color was used in such a way as to create a recession and projection of the diagonal thrust. The initial burst of inspiration received from nature seemed to diminish as I responded to the pure abstractions of form and color. The form which was constructed evolved from a relationship with the world around me, my feelings, my emotions. Although only a portion of nature was grasped, the image left encompassed the total form of my experience.

PAINTING I (Figure 1)

PAINTING II (Figure 2)

Oil

The painting reproduced here is a direct result of environmental influences. It must be remembered that nature is not limited to the objects we see-but that everything in nature offers the possibility of creative transformation. I cannot be immune to the emptiness I feel in the rural northern plains and this painting is a direct result of an empty unburdened civilization. It is in part inspired by my first painting in that a single large form is used. This form, though, is held precariously in place by the void around it. My intention is to convey a sense of solitude that is at times a part of our environment. It is as though all nervous energy inspired by forces in nature has elapsed into a state of compatibility with inorganic nature. The large white form that represents the solidity of inorganic nature has emerged with the fog-like atmosphere and floats through space which seems calm and limitless. There is no specific sense of place or direction on the land's surface. It is just a serene moment. This mood of serenity is set, in part, by the absense of color, and by the simplicity of the form.

What I have tried to do is create a new visual reality, a flexible order based on what I felt emerging from my environment at a particular moment. This is one of the few paintings which developed freely and easily and was completed in about three working hours.

PAINTING II (Figure 2)

UNTITLED NUMBER I (Figure 3)

Watercolor

Recently collage watercolors in art magazines moved me deeply. They prompted me to set oil painting temporarily aside and turn to watercolor as an artistic outlet. I label this incident as a very fortunate occurrence; it gave me a greater insight into the possibilities of watercolor technique. I had done a number of previous watercolors under the impression that watercolor was a medium which required careful handling. It seemed that if mistakes were made it was just as well to start over because the paper surface would be blemished permanently even though the error was corrected. Untitled Number I refutes this statement. It is a direct result of the stimulation received from another artist's work and it proves that watercolor, like oil, offers the same working conditions of constructing and destruction, with the aid of pasted papers, until the water painting is complete. The paper, usually tissue, forces one to realize the presence of texture and to use this texture advantageously.

The motivation for Untitled Number I received from natural elements was a combination of emerging rock and the effect of heat upon this inorganic structure. What I have tried to create in this painting is a fixed emotional response to absorbed heat in nature forms; heat that is sustained and reflected by the land under its long exposure. The northern Minnesota region has abundant rock formations deposited by glacial action. I am not trying to show a specific experience about deposits but am trying to create an underlying structure which will disclose the essence of rock and

the vibrations of heat in this given atmosphere. I am trying to translate this into a feeling of visual richness. This richness, created by the use of color, expresses the solid and stately strength of these land shapes and the feeling of heat being absorbed and reflected by these shapes. I have tried to express the sensations of heat; the intensity of feelings created by heat—some of these feelings being rage, agitation, exasperation, and the height of stress or action.

UNTITLED NUMBER I (Figure 3)

UNTITLED NUMBER II (Figure 4)

Watercolor

What I am trying to convey is the content of the inner structure of nature. This inner structure of nature in the expressiveness of the form Untitled Number II was an aesthetic experience in the manipulation of crowded and compact forms originating below the surface of the earth; possibly a cluttering of man made objects left to decay and rot that become infinite with nature. It is a struggle between the elements of decay and that part of the earth that still nourishes life. The effects of decay in this unseen world reaches out in all directions contaminating the organic nature. All natural growth ceases; only the organisms associated with decay continue to thrive. The areas that have passed gradually from a sound and prosperous state to one of imperfection, adversity, and dissolution is shown by the spattered and textured surfaces of the collage elements. The white thrusting area acts as unoccupied space or as atmosphere infiltrating the formidable environment. It also portrays a spirited ascending movement—a means of escape that retaliates against the enveloped debris.

UNTITLED NUMBER II (Figure 4)

UNTITLED NUMBER III (Figure 5)

Watercolor

Each watercolor in this series provides the necessary stimulation to continue the technique. A composition, whether watercolor or oil, in essence produces new thought processes and new emotional sensations that I use as an indirect stimulation for my next painting. Untitled Number III is again a display of the external physical characteristics of the earth's surface. I was mostly concerned with an interpretation of natural architectural forms that develop through erosion or destruction of the earth's soil. This wearing and tearing away process is a flowing process associated with heavy rains and run-offs attributed to spring floods. The destruction caused by this energy is evident in the dark crater-like recesses. These dark areas also co-operate aesthetically by contrasting with the brighter tones giving the illusion of movement in and out. The organization of the painting is also intent on showing that some of the land surface serves as protection against nature's forces. The lighter areas, in contrast to the eroded portions, set up a rib-like sculptural quality that is reminiscent of stability; something more enduring and not so easily destroyed.

The transparent effect of watercolor created patterns that helped sustain the emotional involvement I had in suggesting a new order for a changing environment in Untitled Number III.

UNTITLED NUMBER III (FIGURE 5)

UNTITLED NUMBER IV (Figure 6)

Watercolor

Up to this point, my watercolor painting had come smoothly and easily. The expressions I had been conveying found their way to the painted surface in a consistent and logical growth of development. An artist always encounters obstacles in the production of a painting. He meets these obstacles as a challenge to his intellect. Problems of form, use of color, line, space and technique are ever present. My efforts in painting have been concentrated upon a means to realize a dynamic order without losing contact with nature. Untitled Number IV did not flow easily from my subconscious mind. It was as though I were being torn between any one of a number of alternatives. My ideas changed so rapidly I could not keep abreast of the situation; I could not find a way to harmonize the elements of the painting. Forms seemed to oppose one another, color struck discordant notes, line I had used appeared only as added line and did not become an integral part of the composition. I finally gave up in disgust and the painting was set aside. When I did again come across this painting, some months later, I began to tear and cut away much of the paper I had pasted, giving no thought to what I was doing. Suddenly, it was apparent that the effects left by the destruction of the surface was in essence the emotion I had been seeking earlier.

This emotional affinity with the natural elements found its place on the painted surface in the form of destruction left by the forces of wind. This work is apparently calm and does not show the presence of a violent wind. It is, rather, the effects produced

by such forces of the wind. Earlier attempts were futile because I was trying to capture the blowing sensations of a wind swept landscape. The peeling or scraping away process (in addition to repainting) produced a tactile sensation previously unexperienced. It indeed gave me a new insight into the realm of painting and re-affirmed my belief that the artist's role is closely associated with experimentation and exploration in his need to express.

UNTITLED NUMBER IV (Figure 6)

UNTITLED NUMBER V (Figure 7)

Watercolor

Although this painting may have been begun as a problem in the abstract arrangement of color and shape, the emergence of images suggesting natural forms has been my main concern as it has been in all of my work. I see in nature underlying structures which I embellish and give expression to in an individual way.

This painting was inspired by Untitled Number I but the expression that developed, as the painting grew became a personalized interpretation depicting my response to a changing environment. This environment is associated with nature's seasonal changes. Autumn is a period that nervously stirs to rest. It is a period that blossoms and explodes before succumbing to the inevitable. A period that fills my heart with simultaneous sadness and joy. To apprehend this feeling I must envision the mood rather than find its image. What I have hoped to evoke is a caught mood, an instant of time, that catches nature in the course of gradual destruction which occurs as summer passes into autumn leaving in its wake a beauty that will all too suddenly fade into a lifeless winter. The color in Untitled Number V is used to indicate the suspension of nature caught in all its explosive beauty.

UNTITLED NUMBER V (Figure 7)

UNTITLED NUMBER VI (Figure 8)

Watercolor

Untitled Number VI was done rapidly and intuitively in a collage technique. The use of pasted materials always influences my development as a painter and although I make use of accidental happenings, I always control the growth of the composition. Often there is not a particular idea or mood in mind as the painting begins. The expression that finds its way to the painted surface is reinforced by my need to search and explore. It is not only a search for decorative and aesthetically pleasing form and color but also a search for a meaningful mood or emotion that can be associated with these forms and colors. It is then, out of this combination of circumstances that Untitled Number VI was born.

This painting is an honest attempt to find some glimpse of warmth in the frozen land forms of winter that are caught and held in a state of suspension. The subdued red in Untitled Number VI is used to indicate a sort of shallow warmth that I feel prevailing over a barren waste produced by the strained energy of a distant sun. This energy, though trying to extend some influences in this cold climate, has had little success in unlocking these solid forms that have been structured together by frost and ice. The subject again is experienced emotionally rather than physically and the landscape like forms and shapes in the painting have no definite direction or existing origin.

UNTITLED NUMBER VI (Figure 8)

PAINTING III (Figure 9)

Oil

Painting III was begun with the earlier oils in this thesis but not completed until after the last watercolor was finished. The influence of spontaneity from the watercolor series is very definitely felt in my later oils. Much has been said in these past few years about "action painting" and automatic gestures that can release the timid and inhibited painter from a too conscious effort when at work. As I approached and analyized this painting for a second time, I seemed to sense an anxiety, a burst of anger, in fact, a sense of being bogged down in the execution of my oils. I relaxed and let go with my oils in a new found way for the first time. It was at this moment that I decided to transfer the new developments I had learned in watercolor to oil. Painting III was rapidly re-executed in form manipulation and in a series of color changes using a more fluid paint. Accidental effects in painting were encouraged as they had been in the watercolors.

This painting is closely allied to Untitled Number VI. It is a second interpretation of nature in winter. However, the emotional involvement stressed in Painting III is concerned with the unimpassioned, frigid conditions that encompass nature with a situation of hopelessness and sadness; a feeling that I have experienced on the bleakest of winter days. The colors are predominantly of dark tonal values and gray whites to achieve this attitude. The small muted red shape is used as a symbol of hope or encouragement that something better will materialize.

PAINTING III (Figure 9)

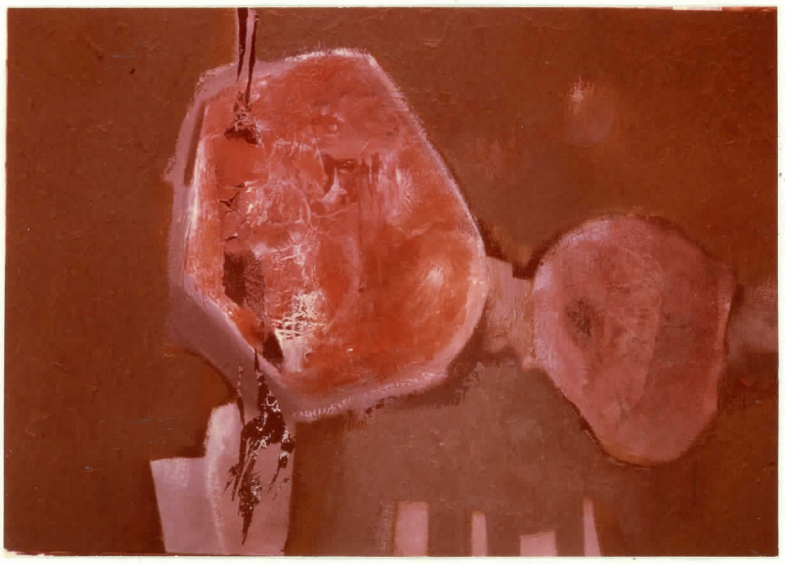
PAINTING IV (Figure 10)

Oil

Painting IV is a deliberate attempt to utilize the collage technique that developed in the watercolor paintings. This technique embraces the concept of constructive and destructive activity associated with collage and paint. Tissue paper and oil paint were used in combination. Some of the paper remained intact and was glazed over with colors while in other areas the paper was torn off after it had been painted leaving unusual textural effects by seepage of paint through the paper unto the canvas surface.

In Painting IV I became intrigued with growth as might be seen in the microscopic world of bacteria. This painting represents an interpretive view of a living one-celled organism that is capable of reproducing itself. The large red circular shape represents the vibrating mature cell that has just divided. The results of division are evident in the infant cell form that is still attached to the mother cell. This later cell will quickly blossom into maturity and the cycle will repeat itself.

The very fact that this represent a microscopic view, pinpoints individual cells and creates a field of empty space focusing our attention solely on the action of an individual cell form. These microbes or germs are one-celled organisms belonging to the plant kingdom. Though they cannot be seen with the naked eye, they are present everywhere--in the air, soil, water, in various kinds of food, in both living and dead plants and animals and in particular anything containing sufficient moisture.



PAINTING IV (Figure 10)

PAINTING V (Figure 11)

Oil

The outward appearance of natural forms is of little value to me. The interest sustained from the outer shell of nature is ephemeral. Rather, it is an interest in the active energy of chemical and physical change that determines the direction my energies will take to express my thoughts. Painting V is an attempt to create the growing energy of the subterranean part of a plant; its root system. The desire was not to depict the subject but to discover the essence of it: the powerful drama of growth pushing itself upward toward the life sustaining sunlight in a struggle for survival. The activity of growth continues above the surface only to die again and become a part of the next seasons nutrient.

Painting V evolved through a number of different stages until each stage contributed to the final product in terms of color and texture. The principle of seepage of color through tissue paper spoken of in Painting IV was employed on the painting and I felt that the results were immensely gratifying because of the irregular fragmentation that occurred in the layers of color. The interest created by this aesthetic process became an integral part of the total concept of the painting.

The use of silver metallic paint which was applied in an experimental venture should be mentioned. Though I am uncertain of its values at this time, I feel it is worthwhile to continue with further experimental work in this medium.

PAINTING V (Figure 11)

PAINTING VI (Figure 12)

Oil

There is an infinite number and diversity of problems facing the painter when he deviates from the conventional representation of the pictorial world. There is an endless variety of solutions to these problems, and almost all of them are equally valid. The problem which confronted me in this painting was again a way to interpret the world of rocks as was done in Untitled Number I. This time, however, I was seeking to convey a different emotional response; a response that interprets rock as it exists in its environment. The rock forms emerge with great nobility upon the flat northern Minnesota land with dramatically powerful external forms. Painting VI is not intended to show the external form of rock but only to make its presence known. It is instead a painting that conveys and discloses the essence and the mystery of rock as it lies imbedded in the warm timeless earth. This feeling is projected by the use of reds in the lower half of the painting that interprets the earth in such a way as to make it feel warm, alive and all encompassing. The heavy rock forms below the surface have absorbed the same feeling. But as they ascend, their color changes to black and parallels the color of the atmospheric environment. I have envisioned in this painting the subterranean as pure and clean symbolic of man's absence--the atmosphere as conjested, unclean, and evil symbolic of man's presence.

PAINTING VI (Figure 12)

CONCLUSION

With nature as the motivating factor and provider of emotional and physical sensations, a wealth of material has been accumulated to express my ideas and aesthetic beliefs. My role has been to re-order the concepts of nature into more meaningful and personal visual expressions. Expressions I hope that not only serve artistic outlets but in a more purposeful way serve as a means to show the underlying truths of nature. The influence of past and present painters has undoubtedly been felt, but I have not entertained the idea of painting or following the style of any one individual or group of individuals but have instead elected to remain as independent as possible and to concern myself only with those ideas and beliefs that seem to have value. In the production of my works it became necessary to evaluate and judge much of what was absorbed from nature; and to arrive at what I considered was important personally as an emotional, intellectual and aesthetic means of conveying an expression.

The ingredient of discovery through exploration in painting is a prime factor in my neverending quest for ways to express ideas. It is a search that not only links me to discoveries in nature but also associates me with creative aspects in the studio. The task of composing this thesis has clarified to a greater degree my understanding of nature and technical aspects that serve as a means of communicating nature to the viewer. This clarification of nature has also pointed out how all encompassing is our natural environment--the more I seek, the more I find. It is never-ending. The inspiration

received from one tiny facet of nature such as a root pushing up through the warm soil might well serve as the sole subject for all paintings in my life time. Although I am not bound to remain compatible with this thesis, any one particular painting in my thesis offers unlimited possibilities of extensive adaptation for future courses of action. Such a course of action, to be more specific, would invovle me with further research in watercolor collage, ex - perimenting with pasted elements that would provide greater tactile sensations on the painted surface. The question I must seek an answer to is what are the limits in the weight of material that can be adhered to paper and still maintain a sense of purpose and aesthetic value as a watercolor. Beginners using collage textures have the inclination to gather too many contrasting assortments of materials into one grouping. A few well placed highly textured areas set against large simple areas of space will often be more effective than having every inch textured and eye-catching.

There is also unlimited research in oil painting proceedures by creating textures from absorptions of paint through paper that I spoke of in Painting IV. It is well worth the effort to collect fine papers such as Japanese and Chinese papers of all weights, tissues, thin bond, tracing paper and the like. Experimentation in the length of time papers are left on the painted surface for the purposes of texture can be an important factor in determining the outcome of a painting.

It is a long and complicated task for any painter to find his personal voice and keep it in tact and natural. An honest effort to paint what he knows and understands and a vital progressive attitude toward learning and searching deeper is the only basis for fine work.

Where constant searching will lead can only be surmised at this time. In the real sense of the word it is through growth that one becomes a true artist.

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